

REMARKS

Consideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested.

By the present amendment, claims 1, 35, 46, 52, and 55 have been amended. New claims 57-61 have been added. Claims 1-41, 46, and 48-61 are pending in the application.

Independent claims 1, 35, 46, 52, 55, and 56 each recite that the fill tube directs inflation fluid into the inflatable volume of the inflatable curtain to pressurize the curtain evenly along its length. This is not taught or suggested by Stevens et al.

In Stevens et al., the apertures are sized and spaced uniformly along the length of the fill tube. The fill tube extends only partially into the inflatable curtain, along the rear and middle portions of the curtain (about two-thirds of the curtain). The fill tube does not extend into the front portion of the curtain (about one-third of the curtain).

In the configuration disclosed in Stevens et al., inflation fluid flows from the fill tube directly into the middle and rear portions of the curtain, while no inflation fluid flows from the fill tube directly into the front portion of the curtain. In Stevens et al., the front portion is inflated by inflation fluid that is directed into the middle and rear portions first, and then flows from the middle and rear portions into the front portion. Thus, in the configuration disclosed in Stevens, et al., the middle and rear portions of the inflatable curtain would inflate and

pressurize before the front portion of the curtain, and the curtain would pressurize unevenly along its length.

Also, in Stevens et al., the volume of the front, middle, and rear portions of the inflatable curtain varies along the length of the curtain. The middle portion has the largest volume, followed by the rear and front portions, respectively. The construction of the fill tube, however, does not account for these varying volumes. The apertures in the fill tube of Stevens, et al., being uniformly sized and spaced along the tube, would not deliver proportional amounts of inflation fluid to the front, middle, and rear portions of the curtain. Thus, for this further reason, the apparatus disclosed in Stevens et al. would not provide uniform pressurization of the inflatable curtain.

For the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 35, 46, 52, 55, and 56 are allowable. Claims 2-34 depend from claim 1 and are therefore allowable as depending from an allowable claim and for the specific features recited therein. Claims 36-41 depend from claim 35 and are therefore allowable as depending from an allowable claim and for the specific features recited therein. Claims 48-51 depend from claim 46 and are therefore allowable as depending from an allowable claim and for the specific features recited therein. Claims 53 and 54 depend from claim 52 and are therefore allowable as depending from an allowable claim and for the specific features recited therein.

New claim 57 rewrites claim 1 to include limitations of claim 3 and is therefore allowable, as indicated in the Office


Serial No. 09/840,196

Action. New claim 58 rewrites claim 1 to include limitations of claim 19 and is therefore allowable, as indicated in the Office Action. New claim 59 rewrites claim 46 to include limitations of claim 49 and is therefore allowable, as indicated in the Office Action. New claim 60 rewrites claim 56 to include limitations of claim 3 and should be allowable. New claim 61 rewrites claim 56 to include limitations of claim 19 and should be allowable.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above identified application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Matthew M. Shaheen  
Reg. No. 45,367

TAROLLI, SUNDHEIM, COVELL,  
& TUMMINO L.L.P.  
526 Superior Avenue - Suite 1111  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114-1400  
Phone: (216) 621-2234  
Fax: (216) 621-4072